

## Constructive Criticism

As you continue in service, I encourage you to read Bill's essay on leadership from time to time. This month, a particular passage spoke to me directly:

*There are always the constructive critics; our friends indeed... Then there are those whom we like to call our "destructive" critics. They power-drive, they are "politickers," they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip, and general scuttle-butt to gain their ends — all for the good of A.A., of course! But in A.A., we have at last learned that these folks, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be really destructive at all, depending very much on how we relate ourselves to them.... There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience, than the workouts these usually well-meaning but erratic brother members afford us.*

I'm not perfect yet, so when I find myself in an uncomfortable spotlight, my first reactions are far from the state of humility—that perpetual quietness of heart—that I would love to possess at all times. But then I can do a spot-check inventory. I can look to the spiritual principles in our steps, traditions and concepts. I can reach out for support from trusted fellow members, including my sponsor and service sponsor, and be open to the lessons.

And in a very recent instance, I was able to have a wonderful discussion with other affected members with whom it is my pleasure to serve. Some of the most difficult conversations can be the most beautiful in A.A., when we bring our best selves to the table in the spirit of mutual respect and love.

I do not always need to reach out directly to another member and try to "correct" them. And I need not carry resentment. I can be grateful for the constructive workouts I receive. And if I ever find myself in their shoes, which I could at any time, I will try to ask myself before I speak, "Is what I am saying true? Is it helpful? Is it kind?"

Striving to be a good example, Jennifer B., Panel 71 Delegate

### References:

"Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need" (Concept IX)  
*As Bill Sees It*, pp. 183 and 215